

Message Text

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65-61

ACTION NEA-06

INFO OCT-01 SS-14 ISO-00 PM-03 MC-01 NSC-05 NSCE-00 L-01

SP-02 ACDA-10 DODE-00 SAJ-01 EUR-08 INR-05 CIAE-00

/057 W

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R 151234Z APR 75

FM AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1077

INFO AMEMBASSY KUWAIT

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

C O N F I D E N T I A L TEHRAN 3455

LIMDIS

BEIRUT PASS USINT BAGHDAD

STATE PASS SECDEF

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MASS, IR

SUBJ: GOI LANCE MISSILE REQUEST

REFS: A) STATE 77420 B) KUWAIT 1514 C) JIDDA 2518

1. MISSION COMMENTS ON QUERIES RAISED PARAGRAPH 1, REF
(A), FOLLOW:

A. IRANIAN INTEREST IN LANCE MISSILE CAN BE LINKED,
WE BELIEVE, TO REPORTS THAT SOVIETS WILL SUPPLY IRAQ
WITH SCUD AND THAT U.S. WILL PROVIDE ISRAEL WITH LANCE.

B. OWING TO IMPROVED RELATIONS WITH IRAQ AND
ABSENCE OF ANY IMMEDIATE THREAT OR SUITABLE INSTALLATIONS
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ON EASTERN BORDER, WE ASSUME THAT IIGF WOULD HOLD LANCE
MISSILES IN RESERVE FOR TRAINING PURPOSES, POSSIBLY AT
ISFAHAN OR OTHER INTERIOR IIGF BASES. SHOULD RELATIONS
WITH IRAQ DETERIORATE IT IS POSSIBLE GOI WOULD DEPLOY
LANCE TOWARD WESTERN BORDER TO SERVE AS A DETERRENT
AGAINST IRAQI USE OF SCUD.

C. LIKE ALL SOPHISTICATED WEAPONS SYSTEMS, LANCE WOULD CREATE A SERIOUS DRAIN ON LIMITED IRANIAN RESERVES OF SKILLED MANPOWER. DOD IS IN BETTER POSITION TO ESTIMATE NUMBER OF PERSONNEL AND LEVELS OF SKILLS REQUIRED BY LANCE. CONSIDERABLE CONTRACTOR ASSISTANCE WOULD PROBABLY BE REQUIRED FOR MAINTENANCE SUPPORT UNTIL SUFFICIENT NUMBER OF TRAINED IRANIANS WERE AVAILABLE.

D. IN VIEW OF IRAQI ACQUISITION OF SCUD, WE BELIEVE CASE CAN BE MADE FOR VALID IRANIAN MILITARY REQUIREMENT FOR LANCE TO SERVE AS A DETERRENT. LANCE WOULD ALSO PROVIDE STANDOFF ARTILLERY CAPABILITY MADE NECESSARY BY 160 NM RANGE SCUD.

2. PRINCIPAL OBJECTIONS TO IRANIAN ACQUISITION OF LANCE WOULD APPEAR TO US TO BE MORE POLITICAL THAN TECHNICAL. WE FORESEE FOLLOWING NEGATIVE FACTORS: 1) INCREASED ARAB APPREHENSIONS RE IRANIAN POWER AND POSSIBLE INTEREST IN ACQUISITION OF LANCE OR COMPARABLE SYSTEM BY ARAB NEIGHBORS (REFS B AND C); 2) SETBACK TO IRANIAN/U.S. NUCLEAR COOPERATION IN VIEW OF POSSIBLE USE OF MODIFIED LANCE FOR DELIVERY OF NUCLEAR WARHEADS. ON OTHER HAND, DECISION TO DENY LANCE TO IRAN WOULD CAUSE GOI LEADERSHIP TO QUESTION WHETHER USG CONSIDERED IT AS IMPORTANT AN ALLY AS ISRAEL AND EUROPEAN STATES WHICH HAVE BEEN PROVIDED LANCE. OWING TO SHAH'S PREOCCUPATION WITH MILITARY SUPPLY QUESTIONS, DENIAL OF LANCE COULD HAVE SOME REPERCUSSIONS ACROSS SPECTRUM OF USG/GOI RELATIONS. CLEARLY, DECISION WILL BE DIFFICULT AND EITHER REFUSAL OR APPROVAL WILL CARRY COSTS FOR USG.

3. ACCORDINGLY, WE THINK WE SHOULD ATTEMPT TO DISCOURAGE IRANIANS FROM ACQUIRING LANCE. WE DO NOT HAVE IMPRESSION THAT WEAPON HAS VERY HIGH PRIORITY IN GOI PLANNING AND WE CONFIDENTIAL

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DOUBT THAT WE WILL MEET WITH EXCEPTIONALLY STRONG IRANIAN RESISTANCE TO OUR POINT OF VIEW. HOWEVER, IF WE HAVE MISJUDGED GOI INTEREST AND THERE IS HARD PUSH FOR SYSTEM, WE BELIEVE WE SHOULD AGREE IN PRINCIPLE TO SUPPLY IT. IN THAT CASE WE BELIEVE WE SHOULD SEEK TO DEFER DEFINITE GOI DECISION TO PURCHASE AS LONG AS POSSIBLE.

4. WE SEE TWO OPTIONS FOR MAKING PRESENTATION TO SHAH WHO WILL MAKE FINAL GOI DECISION. CHIEF, ARMISH/MAAG, PERHAPS WITH SUPPORT OF VISITING EXPERTS, COULD OUTLINE TECHNICAL DISADVANTAGES, EXPLAIN WHY WE HAVE FOUND IT APPROPRIATE TO RELEASE THIS MISSILE TO OTHER NATIONS AND ATTEMPT TO PERSUADE SHAH THAT ACQUISITION OF LANCE WOULD NOT SEEM TO BE IN IRAN'S BEST INTERESTS FROM MILITARY POINT OF VIEW. ALTERNATIVELY, APPROACH

OF THIS NATURE COULD BE MADE BY SECRETARY SCHLESINGER OR OTHER DOD
OFFICIALS DURING SHAH'S VISIT TO WASHINGTON. IF TECHNICAL ARGU-
MENTATION PROVED UNSUCCESSFUL, WE COULD THEN CONSIDER
WHETHER TO APPROACH SHAH WITH POLITICAL CONSIDERATIONS.

5. APPRECIATE EARLY WASHINGTON REACTION. IF APPROACH IS
TO BE MADE HERE, WE WILL NEED INSTRUCTIONS FOR CONTENT
OF PRESENTATION.

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